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The Urgency of the Lord's Work

By Jerry H. Wilson

"We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work," (John 9:4). The word "we" in this passage refers to Jesus Christ and His disciples (vs. 2). "We must work the works" is a divine principle applicable to Jesus Christ and all the disciples who saw Him in the flesh as well as all His followers down to the end of time. We must work for God while the time and opportunities are available. This reveals the express purpose of our fleshly existence.

Jesus tried during His personal ministry to prepare His disciples and the world for the coming of His kingdom by teaching and presenting infallible proof that He was the Christ, the Son of God in the flesh. The marching orders of the kingdom were given after the resurrection of Christ and shortly before His ascension. *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,"* (Mark 16:15-16). The disciples of the first century labored under the urgency of this commission and their phenomenal success in seeking and saving the lost is a matter of inspired record in the Acts of the Apostles.

The apostle Paul was one who felt this urgency as keenly as is humanly possible. He tried to impress this great responsibility upon his converts. Consider his words, *"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil,"* (Eph. 5:16). *"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time,"* (Col. 4:5). Paul does not mean to imply that we can buy back any time that is already expended but that our lives as Christians are an open book. We should begin at this very second to make the most of the Christian life and take advantage of spiritual opportunities. The

task remains for us to preach the gospel of the kingdom and make salvation through the risen Christ available to all mankind.

This work must be done *"while it is day."* Jesus clarified that in verse 5 by saying, *"As long as I am in the world."* The day of Jesus Christ was His life upon earth. Many passages reveal that He felt a keen consciousness to accomplish His Father's will upon earth. At the early age of twelve years, He asked Joseph and Mary, *"Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"* (Luke 2:49). During this fruitful ministry in Samaria, Jesus said, *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work,"* (John 4:34). Shortly before the humiliation of the cross, Jesus prayed to His Father, *"I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,"* (John 17:4). As he expired, He said, *"It is finished,"* (John 19:30). Whenever Jesus breathed His last, His work was accomplished. He had given His life as a ransom for all mankind. His blood had been shed to purchase the church.

Every disciple who has professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Master must have felt the weighty responsibility of His work. We have a divinely appointed time to work as children of God during our fleshly existence. How we use our opportunities in this life will determine our eternal destiny. *"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* (James 4:14, 17).

The mandate is pressing. *"The night (death) cometh when no man can work."* Let us all strive to obey God in living the Christian life and sowing the seed of the kingdom while there is time and opportunity. *"Walk while ye have light, lest darkness come upon you,"* (John 12:35).

TRUE RELIGION

By John Waddey

Across the years hundreds of attempts have been made to define true religion. In the book of James a divine description of true religion is given.

(1) **To practice true religion one must control his tongue.** "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26). A true Christian must be "slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). He will put away falsehood and speak truth (Eph. 4:25). "No corrupt speech (will) proceed out of (his) mouth" but only such as is good for edifying (Eph. 4:29).

(2) **Pure religion is concerned for those who cannot help themselves.** "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction . . ." (Jas. 1:27). In every age God's true disciples have been humanitarians. Job delivered the poor and the fatherless. He was "eyes to the blind" and feet to the lame (Job 29:12-16). Isaiah called upon his generation to "relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17). We can do no less today if we would please him. Every Christian must be a friend to the helpless.

(3) **True Christians keep themselves unspotted from the world** (James 1:26). All of God's children will deny ungodliness and worldly lusts while living soberly, righteously and godly (Titus 2:12). Because we have been washed, sanctified and justified, unrighteousness will not find a place in our lives (I Cor. 6:9-10). Not only must we avoid worldly conduct, we will also strive to avoid a worldly mind (Romans 8:7). God's children know that evil thoughts are sinful in themselves as well as the actual deed (Matt. 5:28).

(4) **Those holding the true faith do not discriminate against a person because**

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of race or wealth or social status. Those who commit this sin are convicted by the law as transgressors (James 2:9). All men can become children of God by faith in Christ and immersion (Galatians 3:26-27). God has only one kind of church - it is multi-racial. This lesson is yet to be learned by some disciples.

(5) **True faith is generous toward the poor.** To see a brother or sister in lack of clothing or food, and only respond with words, indicates that faith is dead and lifeless (James 2:14-17). Christians labor with their hands not only for their own needs but also to share with him that hath need (Ephesians 4:28). In the judgment, the Lord will take a special interest in how we dealt with the needs of the poor (Matthew 25:34-40).

(6) **Those practicing true religion are obedient to all of God's commands.** "Faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). It is those who do the will of the heavenly Father who will enter the heavenly kingdom (Matt. 7:21). The concept that a person can be pleasing to God with only mental trust (faith only) is false and destructive. Saving faith is working faith (Galatians 5:6).

(7) **True religion is not bitter and factious, rather it is peaceable and gentle** (James 3:13-18). How many members of the Lord's church fail here! How many preachers! As God's elect, we will put on "a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering: forbearing one another and forgiving each other as the Lord forgave us" (Col. 3:12-13).

May the beauty of Jesus be seen in every saint as we practice the pure and

undefiled religion of our Lord. The world will be blessed, the church will be strengthened, and we will be saved.

Sin In God's World

By Mike Pace

After completing the creation, God was pleased with what he had done. (Gen. 1:31), "And God saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good." There was no sin in the world at that time. In our study of salvation let us allow the Bible to tell us what sin is.

WHAT IS SIN?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4).

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17).

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23).

We see then that sin is transgression of God's law. Sin is knowing to do good and not doing it. Since faith comes from God's word, the Bible (Romans 10:17), we can only be safe by following it's teachings.

Adam and Eve chose to disobey God in eating the forbidden fruit, (Genesis 3:1-24), and they died. Death is separation. They died spiritually. They were driven out of the garden, separated from God's presence. They later died physically because they were separated from the tree of life (Genesis 3:22). As Adam and Eve lusted after the fruit and sinned, so do we become sinners when we are drawn away by our own lusts, (James 1:13-15; Ezekiel 18:20).

WHO HAS COMMITTED SIN?

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6).

"As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one," (Romans 3:10).

One can see from these passages that each one of us that is accountable has sinned and is in need of God's forgiveness of our sins.

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF OUR SINS?

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24).

"Christ will come in flaming fire and punish all who know not God and that obey not the gospel, with everlasting destruction." (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Because of sin, we can conclude from the above passages that we are separated from God in this life. The wages of sin is death. If we die in our sins, this death will be eternal separation from God. It will be an eternal punishment for one who dies, not forgiven of his sins.

HOW IS THE SIN PROBLEM SOLVED?

God hates sin but loves the sinner so much that he provided a remedy for his sins.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him," (Romans 5:9).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:17).

Jesus Christ will save you from your sins if you will obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:11-14; Galatians 3:26-27). If we do not have the blood of Christ applied in this life we will remain separated from God, now and after death.

You can apply the remedy by faith in Christ, (John 20:30-31); by repenting of your sins, (Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9); confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10); and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins, (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36; I Peter 3:21).

How Important is Faith?

By Mike Pace

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6). From this we learn the importance of faith. Christianity is a religion of faith.

WHAT IS FAITH?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1). Faith, in this discussion, is belief or trust in God or Christ, or in things spiritual. Faith is firm conviction produced by knowledge of God's revelation or truth as revealed to man in God's word, the Bible. The Christian has the hope of eternal life with God and Christ in heaven even though he hasn't seen any of this with his human eye.

HOW DOES ONE GET FAITH?

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). The only kind of faith that is pleasing to God must be based on the teachings of His word. People who practice things in religion not found in God's word and base their salvation or their worship on such, are not pleasing to God. *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."* (Matthew 15:9). We need to study God's word and not be deceived into thinking all religious teaching is based on Biblical faith.

ONE FAITH!

People sometimes ask, "What Faith are you?" Man says there are many Faiths, just take your choice. The Bible says there are as many faiths as there are Gods - ONE FAITH. (Ephesians 4:5-6).

Paul speaks of obedience to the faith (Romans 1:5); live by faith (Romans 1:17); walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7); established in the faith (Col. 2:7); work of faith (I Thess. 1:3); some departing from the faith (I Tim. 4:1); and many other statements concerning faith.

The ONE FAITH is a system of belief and practice based on Bible knowledge. Without this Bible foundation there can be no faith.

Paul, at one time persecuted Christians but later preached 'the FAITH' of which he once made havoc (Gal. 1:23). Christians and The Faith were used interchangeably in New Testament times, referring to the same thing. The Bible reveals to us evidence to cause us to have the ONE FAITH and anything else believed in religion from another source is condemned by God, even a small perversion (Galatians 1:6-8).

FAITH ONLY

A popular teaching today is salvation by faith only. Just believe and there is nothing else a sinner need do. Such false teaching as this has caused many to stop

short of fully seeking to do God's will. Even those who promote such a teaching will readily admit that one must repent of their sins. Those that falsely teach the necessity of infant salvation, at the same time condemn them to be eternally lost, with their faith only doctrine, should the infant die not reaching an age capable of believing in Christ. Such nonsense as this is being past off to masses of honest people who think this to be Biblical teaching.

From James 2:20-26 we learn that man is NOT justified by FAITH ONLY. The works needed are the New Testament commands that each of us are responsible for. (Matt. 7:21 and John 14:15).

DIFFERENT BELIEFS?

By Mike Pace

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (John 8:24). No other passages of scripture can illustrate the need to believe in Jesus any better than these. But I ask you what does it mean to believe? I want to illustrate some various kinds of belief.

SILENT BELIEF

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him lest they should be put out of the synagogue:" (John 12:24). It wouldn't be popular for these rulers to confess their belief in Jesus. Therefore by remaining silent they were really in opposition to him.

DEVILS' BELIEF

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). The Devil and his crew believe in Jehovah God. Will they profit by it? Hell is prepared for the Devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:41).

PROCRASTINATING BELIEF

Felix listened to the Apostle Paul concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and he trembled. He procrastinated by putting off hearing Paul until some later time. (Acts 25:24-25). In Acts chapter 26, Paul was brought before King Agrippa to speak concerning his faith in Jesus. After hearing and believing Paul's words, King Agrippa said, ". . . *Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.*" (Acts 26:27).

BELIEF THAT SAVES

In Acts 8:26-40 we read of an Ethiopian who believed Philip's preaching concerning Jesus and this moved him to obey the Gospel of Christ. Please note some things about this man. He had traveled from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God (verse 27). He was reading the Prophet Esaias (or Isaiah 53) and didn't understand the scripture (verses 30-34). We have learned from these passages that the man was sincere and wanted to learn. Philip used the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. The Eunuch wanted to render obedience to the gospel of Christ (verses 35-36). Philip wanted to know what he believed concerning Jesus before he baptized him (verses 36-37). He did not confess his sins as some misguided people are told to do today, but he confessed his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (verse 37). After his confession he and Philip went down into the water and he was baptized (verse 38). Upon his obedience to the preaching of the gospel the Eunuch rejoiced, for now he was a Christian.

WHICH BELIEF DO YOU HAVE?

Are you ashamed of Christ and keep silent? Is your belief like that of the devils? Or do you believe but are putting off until later your obedience to Christ such as Felix and King Agrippa?

Do you desire a saving belief like the Ethiopian; confessing your belief and wanting to be baptized in water that you may have experienced the new birth. (John 3:5)?

If you believe in Christ you shouldn't perish but be moved to obey Christ's commands (Mark 16:16). Jesus said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"**, (John 14:15).

MISSOURI-KANSAS LECTURES

The elders and members of the Lord's church at 15331 East 39th Street in Independence, Missouri have long desired to see the saints in the mid-western United States have the opportunity to attend lectures presented by strong, faithful men from the brotherhood. In an effort to see this hope realized, the Annual Missouri-Kansas Lectures were begun in 1983. The lectures in 1983 consisted of a three day program with eleven speakers and visitors from six states. In 1984 the format was increased to five days, with sixteen speakers and attendance was recorded from fourteen states. The lectures in 1985 promise to be even greater in scope as we will have twenty speakers addressing the theme of "CHURCH GROWTH GOD'S WAY."

Those who will be speaking are -

Roy C. Deaver	Don Deffenbaugh
Glen Elliott	Roy Lanier, Jr.
Jim O'Connor	Walter Pigg
D. Ray Pippin	Ira Y. Rice
Johnny Ramsey	Oran Rhodes
Marvin Rickett	George Salyer
Toney Smith	Pat Surles
Dick Sztanyo	Ernest Underwood
Wendell Winkler	Jack Williams
Michael Wyatt	Suzie Wyatt

We will again this year provide free housing on a first come, first serve basis, and noon meals will be provided at the building. Tapes will be available at the lectures. If you desire further information you may contact:

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How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matthew 3:8;

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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